



This is probably not what you expected, but we will get to the prize later.

February, four years ago my son crossed over the bridge from Cub Scouts to Boys Scouts. After his first camping trip he was hooked. Although I figured that this could be just a passing fad and by December I would be a free man. Leave it to your children to prove you wrong.

As my son's interest and enthusiasm grew in Scouting so did mine. Advised by the closest of relatives "**never to put on the uniform**", I went for Adult Leadership training and became an Assistant Scoutmaster. The weekend training covered a wide range of scouting topics which included camping, cooking, fire starting; knot tying, entertainment and leadership skills. There was also a lot of rain and duct tape, but that's another story.

In a time when the world is moving fast and we slowly become enslaved to our electronic devices, scouting brings the boys back to basics. Our camping trips provide the opportunities for the scouts to experience living away from the comforts of home (even if only for a night or two). The scouts must set up their tents, cook their own food and clean up after themselves. It is remarkable how quickly a child will take on responsibility when their comfort is at stake. I was amazed how my son, who can barely take the time to clean his room, was pitching in without even being asked.

As an Assistant Scoutmaster I get a unique opportunity to work with the scouts as well as the other fathers who are volunteering their time and skills to the troop. Many adults who may not wish to take on leadership roles become merit badge counselors to help the scouts achieve the merit badges they need for rank advancement. The only true requirement to be a merit badge counselor is having an interest and the desire to pass on your enthusiasm for the topic to the scouts. Parents may also participate as fundraisers, trip coordinators and advancement coordinators. Working with the scouts and being part of their success is a most rewarding experience. I know that for whatever effort I have put in, I have received so much more.

Participating in scouting has not only allowed me to share new experiences with my son, but take part in his growth as well as the other boys in the troop. Yes, it requires your time, enthusiasm and patience, but it is well worth it. If your son makes the choice of pursuing the Eagle Scout path, he will need your help and encouragement. And when he joins this special fraternity of young men, the honor will be yours as well as his.

So now we get to the prize. No matter whether your son pursues the path to Eagle Scout or just enjoys the camping and friendships, the time he spends in the troop will open him up to new experiences and principles of scouting. That's his prize. Yours is seeing your son grow from a boy to a well rounded young man, ready to take on the new adventures of college or job opportunities with that extra confidence that can only come from scouting. ***The Boy Scouts of America is a wonderful organization because of all it offers, but it is the parents who volunteer that make it special by participating in it.***

Yours in Scouting,

(Your name here)